

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

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Contact: Kevin O'Connell
202-225-6335

HINCHEY, U.S. AMBASSADOR LAY WREATHS AT TEL AVIV BOMBING SITE

WASHINGTON - U.S. Representative Maurice Hinchey (D-NY) today joined U.S. Ambassador to Israel Martin Indyk in laying memorial wreaths at the site of Friday's bombing of a Tel Aviv nightclub. The suicide bombing caused the deaths of 19 Israeli young people and critical injuries to many others.

"This was a brutal, mindless act that served no purpose but to take the lives of innocent children," said Hinchey. "We are here today to condemn this vicious, senseless act of violence and express our deepest sorrow for the families and a community who have lost their loved ones. I can only hope that the shocking tragedy will reinvigorate efforts to bring about a final settlement."

Hinchey is traveling in the Middle East this week to promote the peace plan proposed by the fact-finding committee headed by former U.S. Senator George Mitchell. While in Israel, he has met with former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak. Later today he is scheduled to meet with Foreign Minister Shimon Peres and Avram Burg, Speaker of the Israeli Knesset.

"Senator Mitchell's report is a fair, comprehensive blueprint for the cessation of the violence in the region," said Hinchey. "If any good can result from this brutal attack, I hope it will be that both sides recognize the need to negotiate a permanent end to the violence. The United States can play a critical role in bringing the parties together."

Following the October 2000 summit at Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, President Clinton formed a fact-finding committee headed by former Senator Mitchell. The committee's work was endorsed by Secretary of State Colin Powell in January. On May 21, the committee presented its findings to President Bush. The Mitchell Plan calls for an immediate end to violence between Palestinians and Israelis and makes more than 15 specific recommendations as to how the two parties can restore the trust necessary to move the peace process forward.

Hinchey was traveling in the region this week on fact-finding mission with The Center for Middle East Peace and Economic Cooperation. The Center was established in 1989 with the goal of fostering the atmosphere necessary for the promotion and protection of peace in the Middle East. Toward that end, the Center seeks to enable American decision-makers to witness first hand the challenges facing leaders who seek peace in the region.

